

Colby, Helms Deny CIA Foreknowledge Of Watergate Entry

By Laurence Stern
Washington Post Staff Writer

The current and former directors of the Central Intelligence Agency denied to senatorial questioners that they had any advance knowledge of the Watergate burglary.

The issue was opened up during a Senate Armed Services Committee closed hearing yesterday to hear testimony by free-lance writer Andrew St. George and by CIA Director William E. Colby.

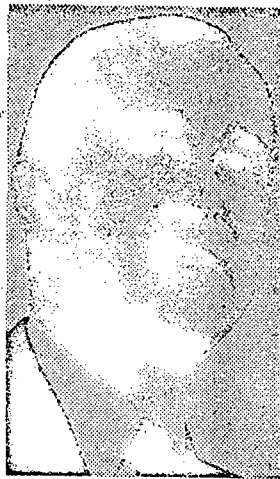
But Colby did acknowledge that one of the convicted Watergate conspirators, Eugenio Martinez, alerted the CIA to E. Howard Hunt's presence in Miami late in 1971 and again in March, 1972.

At the time Martinez was working for Hunt's burglary team, which had already burglarized the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, and Martinez was also employed as a contract employee of the CIA.

Colby's allusion to the Martinez incident was made in a written response to a series of questions by Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), vice chairman of the Senate Watergate committee.

According to Colby's account, Martinez advised a CIA Miami field representative of Hunt's whereabouts and the report was passed on to CIA headquarters.

CIA headquarters, said Colby, told the Miami supervisor that "he should not concern himself with the travel of Mr. Hunt who was an employee of the White House undoubtedly on domestic White House business of no interest to CIA," according to Colby's latest statement.



RICHARD HELMS
... former CIA director

This incident occurred several months after the CIA terminated technical assistance to Hunt, including the supply of spy paraphernalia, which was used in the Ellsberg burglary. CIA officials said they cut off Hunt in August, 1971, because they came to the conclusion that the requests were improper—even though they were made under White House auspices.

One of the allegations made by St. George, in an article in the current Harper's magazine, is that Martinez was secretly reporting to the CIA on the activities of the White House burglary team under Hunt's supervision.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Saturday, Nov. 17, 1973

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This was denied by Colby and by Helms, in a separate written statement.

Helms also denied a claim by St. George that he had a conversation with a CIA watch officer the morning after the Watergate break-in acknowledging that he was tipped off to the operation.

The St. George article claimed the watch officer called Helms on the morning of June 17, 1972, and told him of the arrest of "the White House crew." It quotes Helms as responding, "ah, well, they finally did it."

Helms' statement, released yesterday by Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), said: "I am prepared to swear that no such conversation ever took place."

St. George invoked the First Amendment in refusing to identify his source for the report during yesterday's executive session, according to Symington.

The free-lance writer, a self-described adventurer with a heavy Hungarian accent, said he would consult with officials of Harper's before returning to testify before the Senate committee next Wednesday.

St. George was interviewed at length earlier this week by Baker and Senate Watergate committee minority counsel Fred D. Thompson.

Baker has displayed a persistent interest in the question of possible CIA involvement in Watergate. Symington, on the other hand, has been a staunch defender of Helms for having withstood White House pressures to involved CIA in the Watergate cover-up.

HS/HC-228